United Nations A/C.2/64/SR.27

General Assembly
Sixty-fourth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
27 January 2010

Original: English

Second Committee

Summary record of the 27th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 2 November 2009, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Park In-kook (Chairperson) ..... (Republic of Korea)
later: Mr. Mićić (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Serbia)

Contents

Agenda item 53: Sustainable development

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity

(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-fifth session

(h) Sustainable mountain development

(i) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

09-58912 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 53: Sustainable development (A/64/65, A/64/81, A/64/83-E/2009/83 and Add.1 and A/64/259; A/C.2/64/9 and A/C.2/64/10)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/64/169, A/64/258, A/64/274, A/64/275 and A/64/301)

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/64/278)

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/64/280)

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations (A/64/202)

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (A/64/202 and A/64/379)

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity (A/64/202)

(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-fifth session (A/64/25)

(h) Sustainable mountain development (A/64/222)

(i) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (A/64/277)

1. **Mr. Sha** Zukang (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) observed that the need to find a more sustainable path to development had never been more urgent. Only an integrated approach to addressing the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development would ensure progress in addressing the multiple international crises currently facing the world.

2. The world economy remained crippled by recession, with global unemployment exceeding 6 per cent. Up to 100 million more people than expected prior to the crisis would fall below the poverty line. Fluctuations in food access and availability — exacerbated by the current financial crisis — had negatively impacted the poorest and most vulnerable groups, hunger and extreme poverty remained the reality for many in developing countries and great disparities in access to resources and opportunities persisted between rich and poor countries. That global inequality remained a fundamental obstacle to sustainable development.

3. Climate change compounded those problems and must be urgently and effectively addressed. A comprehensive global response to climate change demanded intensified engagement in adaptation and mitigation measures, with substantial investment of resources. Adaptation in developing countries alone was anticipated to cost some $100 billion per year for the next 40 years, but the international community must not let the financial crisis impede its response. The past year had seen more than 343 natural disasters, affecting more than 42 million people and causing economic damage in excess of $57 billion. With such events undermining efforts to alleviate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals, more concerted attention must be paid to disaster risk reduction — through measures such as implementation of the Hyogo Framework and the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction — in tandem with strategies for climate change adaptation.

4. The planet faced an unprecedented loss of biodiversity and increased environmental degradation. The world's ecosystems were under heightened pressure from expanding populations, and declining forest cover and increasing soil degradation had damaged the livelihoods of local communities. It was thus absolutely essential to conserve and restore key ecosystems through sustainable management of biodiversity.

5. The convergence of crises demanded a cohesive and collective response that would lay a sound foundation for shared growth and sustainable development, with sustainable patterns of consumption and production. The United Nations system as a whole was committed to supporting international efforts towards transformation to a global green economy, to enhanced food security and reduced dependence on fossil fuels. It would contribute research and analysis, normative and policy support for intergovernmental processes, technical assistance and support for capacity-building.

6. Such fundamental change would require substantial investment in renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies, sustainable agriculture and sustainable management of natural resources. It would require investing in training in new job skills, while simultaneously expanding employment. It would require promoting economic growth, while simultaneously forging ahead in mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. And its success would depend also on the delivery of substantial assistance to developing countries through capacity development and the transfer of knowledge and technology.

7. Countries had a shared responsibility to provide solutions that ensured the economic and social well-being of their peoples and preserved the quality of the natural environment. The importance of maintaining and enhancing participatory action through partnerships — another hallmark of sustainable development — could not be overstated. The international community must engage civil society and the private sector, and work together with local and indigenous communities, to address the full range of sustainable development challenges.

8. **Ms. Wahlström** (Assistant-Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action) introduced the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/64/280). The report provided an overview of progress on implementing disaster risk reduction and the Hyogo Framework for Action at national, regional and international levels, over the past 12 months, in response to General Assembly resolution 63/216.

9. While encouraging progress had been made in implementing some aspects of the Hyogo Framework for Action, considerable acceleration and enlargement of action were needed in all priority areas of the Framework if measurable movement was to be achieved towards reducing the impact of disasters by 2015, the end date of the Framework.

10. Highlighting some of the key points of the report, she explained that globally, disaster risk was increasing substantially with regard to most hazards, with the risk of economic loss increasing much faster than the risk of mortality. The first Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction, *Risk and Poverty in A Changing Climate*, launched by the Secretary-General in May 2009, had identified three main drivers for risk patterns, namely deficient urban and local governance, livelihood vulnerability in rural areas, and declining ecosystems.

11. The report underscored the fact that disaster risk was increasingly urban. Approximately one billion people worldwide lived in vulnerable informal settlements around cities, and that number was expected to grow by 25 million a year. At the same time, a global decline in ecosystems was contributing to increased vulnerability for poor communities, both urban and rural. For example, drained wetlands increased flood risks, while deforestation increased both flood and landslide risks. Cities built and planned for small populations had grown into very large cities with drainage systems that were not adequate for torrential rains.

12. In addition, climate change was already magnifying the uneven nature of the distribution of disaster risk, by simultaneously increasing the hazards and eroding the basis for resilience, and therefore putting more and more people at risk, especially poor communities in developing countries.

13. In general terms, countries were making good progress in strengthening capacities, institutional systems and legislation to address deficiencies in disaster preparedness and response, as well as in enhancing early-warning systems. For example, some lower-income countries had made dramatic strides in reducing mortality risk from tropical cyclones and floods.

14. By contrast, little progress had been made in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into social, economic, urban or environmental planning and development. Only 57 countries had so far established their national platforms, and a total of 120 Governments had designated official focal points for monitoring implementation of the Hyogo Framework. Those multi-stakeholder mechanisms were becoming more important and more urgently needed as the rate of risk increased.

15. At the regional level, the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) had focused on mobilizing and coordinating support to regional and national disaster risk reduction processes. That had included strengthening alliances with intergovernmental organizations, in close collaboration with United Nations agencies and the World Bank. The second

session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction had enhanced information-sharing, coordination and monitoring of progress among all stakeholders, bringing together 1,688 participants from 152 Governments and 137 organizations. It had placed strong emphasis on lessons learned and the development of coordinated guidance for systematic implementation of risk reduction measures. It had been very widely held that urgent action was required to harmonize and link the frameworks for both disaster risk reduction on the one hand and climate change adaptation on the other, within the broader context of poverty reduction and sustainable development. The importance of ensuring that authority and resources were made available to reduce disaster risk at the local and community levels had been also emphasized, as had the role of women as drivers of action.

16. The past year had seen several positive developments towards creating an enabling policy environment for international investment in risk reduction. A number of donor countries had developed new policies in support of increased investment, and the European Union had presented its new strategy for supporting disaster risk reduction in developing countries. The World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery continued to develop as a key collaborative mechanism for supporting the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, with total donor pledges exceeding $90 million in 2007-2008.

17. However, despite those positive trends, the Global Platform had identified a drastic mismatch between the resources required to address disaster risk in developing countries and those actually available, and had called for a substantial scaling-up of action and funding, both from national budgets and from international sources. The Global Platform had also highlighted the usefulness of benchmarks, such as allocating a portion of national budgets, or a certain percentage of humanitarian, recovery or development funds to disaster risk reduction work.

18. While the voluntary contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction had increased over the past year, the growing demands on the ISDR secretariat to support effective follow-up to the Hyogo Framework would require more stable and timely contributions covering several years.

19. Work in 2010 and 2011 would focus on strengthening the international cooperation mechanisms established to reduce disaster risk, increase the mobilization of resources and accelerate practical action in support of disaster risk reduction measures for adapting to climate change.

20. The risks were understood, and the solutions and tools were readily available. They were cost-effective and often very simple, such as making sure that the next school or hospital was built in a safe place, not on a flood plain; or keeping city drainage systems functioning when heavy rain occurred. Disaster risk reduction was not a sector, but an approach to development, which could be sustainable only if development investments were disaster-proof. That required a new institutional approach that went beyond isolated sector initiatives.

21. **Mr. Gnacadja** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Secretariat) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 63/218 and the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (chapter II of document A/64/202). The main themes of the report concerned the follow-up actions to the ten-year strategic plan; the synergetic activities amongst the three Rio Conventions and the conclusions and recommendations from the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development related to the Convention to Combat Desertification.

22. The ninth session of the Conference of the Parties, which had taken place in Buenos Aires from 21 September to 2 October 2009, had been the first decision-making meeting of the Parties following the adoption of the ten-year strategic plan and framework for the implementation of the Convention in 2007. Some 36 decisions had been adopted, the topics of which were detailed in the report.

23. In connection with the Joint Inspection Unit report on the assessment of the Global Mechanism, the Conference of the Parties had requested its Bureau to undertake an evaluation of existing potential reporting, accountability and institutional arrangements for the Global Mechanism and their legal and financial implications, including the possibility of identifying a new institution or organization to house the Global

Mechanism. A report on the evaluation would be submitted to the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties.

24. He drew attention to some key recommendations made in the report of the Secretary-General, all related to timely and effective implementation of the Convention as an instrument with the potential to contribute to the ongoing international efforts to address the many global challenges posed by climate change, food insecurity and poverty. They would be found in the part of the report dealing with the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

25. Speaking on behalf of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, he then introduced the report on the United Nations Climate Change Conference, Poznan, 2008, and its follow-up (chapter I of document A/64/202).

26. The Conference in Poznan had coincided with the financial crisis and the beginning of the economic downturn. That had led to concerns that action on climate change might fall victim to the economic situation, but instead the message had been one not only of progress, but also of support for an economic recovery that would achieve green economic growth. Many unsustainable investments in the energy sector postponed because of the economic crisis could be channelled in a green direction, which also offered safe investment returns.

27. Success in Copenhagen hinged on achieving clarity in the following essential issues: emission reduction targets on an individual basis for industrialized countries; nationally appropriate mitigation actions by developing countries, with appropriate financial and technological support; additional, adequate and predictable financing; and institutional and governance structures that were founded in equity. Together with enhanced action on adaptation, those essential issues had been confirmed by world leaders during the Secretary-General's Summit on Climate Change held in New York in September 2009.

28. The Poznan Conference had been characterized by the desire of the Parties to make progress in the two-year negotiating process on strengthened climate change action which had been launched in Bali in 2007 and was due to conclude in Copenhagen. The Ad Hoc Working Groups had held three formal negotiating sessions and one informal session. They were currently holding a session in Barcelona, and it was intended that negotiations would be completed at Copenhagen.

29. There was increasing convergence on arrangements to enhance adaptation action, technology cooperation, action to reduce emissions from deforestation in developing countries and capacity-building. However, insufficient progress had been made on two of the essential issues, namely mitigation and finance. It was critical that annex I parties show bold leadership and that finance be provided for both immediate implementation and long-term action.

30. With the limited amount of time remaining, it was increasingly important to focus on a realistic outcome in Copenhagen that would establish goals commensurate with the scale of the problem. Such an outcome would ensure action between the present and 2012, while safeguarding the possibility of a comprehensive outcome.

31. Finally, he drew attention to some conclusions and recommendations, for consideration by the General Assembly, which were to be found at the end of chapter I of the report.

32. **Mr. Banuri** (Director, Division for Sustainable Development) introduced the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/64/275); on agricultural technology for development (A/64/258); and on the International Year of Sanitation, 2008 (A/64/169), all under sub-item 53 (a). He also introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/64/278), under sub-item 53 (b), and the report of the Secretary-General on the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (A/64/277), under sub-item 53 (i).

33. Accompanying his statement with a computerized slide presentation, he explained that the reports covered a wide range of issues that were pertinent to the sustainable development agenda, notably matters of vulnerability, waste, pollution, energy, water, land, food and technology. The Division for Sustainable Development was pursuing ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of the reports that it submitted to the

Committee. It was to be hoped that some progress was visible already, and any guidance would be very welcome as to how the reports could be improved further. In preparing the reports, the Division had worked closely with other United Nations agencies and sought input from outside experts, stakeholders, government reports, and elsewhere.

34. The concept of sustainable development involved recognition that the Earth was a finite planet and that there were ecological limits that mankind could not and must not cross, as well as recognition that, if people were living at the very edge of survival, it would not be feasible to ask them to contribute to a common agenda. However, there was now enough knowledge, enough production and enough capacity in the world for people not to be at the edge of survival: Without equity, addressing sustainability concerns might not be easy. Sustainable development could be seen as a bridge between environment and development but also between North and South, identifying the common agenda on which all could cooperate, between government, business and civil society, between the present and the future, and between a longer-term vision and what had to be done in the short term.

35. If the sustainable development movement could be said to have started with the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962, from then on the United Nations system had been involved at every stage, making agreements, holding conferences and establishing treaty bodies and supporting institutions. The progress report of the Secretary-General on Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/64/275) identified the areas where the United Nations system had been working on the broad sustainable development agenda. In particular, it contained several important tables which juxtaposed positive trends where achievements had been made and negative trends where there was still work to be done. Those tables covered all of the Agenda 21 items, clustered into four areas: Outcomes in sustainable human development; Outcomes in conservation and management of resources for development; Outcomes in environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals, hazardous wastes and sewage-related issues and radioactive wastes; and Outcomes in institutions and governance. The report also contained a section containing the views of Member States regarding a high-level event on sustainable development. Many views were positive, but some reservations were also expressed about timing and the accommodation of existing agendas.

36. The report on agricultural technology for development (A/64/258) stressed that agriculture should be treated as a knowledge sector, with investment in knowledge being fundamental. It also took the view that the sector needed to be integrated into national sustainable development strategies. A central issue of the sustainable agriculture revolution was how to achieve increases in productivity while maintaining ecosystem integrity. Many findings on those issues had emerged from the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and details were provided in the report.

37. Sustainability of agriculture depended on appropriate investments: there was a need to invest in research into adapted technologies for local agro-ecological conditions; in extension, especially for smallholders and women; in farmers' education and training; in the physical infrastructure of agriculture; and in the scaling-up of best practices, both in agriculture and in rural development.

38. Vulnerability was the focus of the report on the follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/64/278). The report identified the structural, institutional and physical sources of vulnerability as a barrier to the achievement of sustainable development, and also chronicled national efforts, including strategies, assessments and policies to overcome that barrier. The report also provided a road map for the review process of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, including the tying together of the stakeholder consultations.

39. The report on the International Year of Sanitation, 2008 (A/64/169) also juxtaposed positive achievements with negative areas where more work was needed. The successes included the fact that sanitation was now being treated as an important matter, to be incorporated into national policies; that integrated frameworks were being established; that five regional conferences had served to strengthen political commitment to the achievement of sanitation-related targets; and that

national partnerships — a key feature of the sustainable development approach — had been created in many countries. By contrast, however, without significant further increases in national efforts and global support, targets of the Millennium Development Goals related to sanitation would not be achieved.

40. The Secretary-General's report on the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (A/64/277) called for a major surge in investment in renewable energy, in pursuit of three goals: to increase the share of renewable energy in the total energy mix, to increase the access of poor countries and poor households to modern energy services in general and renewable energy in particular, and to achieve a rapid reduction in the cost of renewable energy, such that it would become the natural and default solution to climate change. The report also called for increased investment in research and development, both regarding renewable energy itself and for related fields such as batteries, grids and efficiency.

41. **Ms. Ratsifandrihamanana** (Director, New York Liaison Office of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) observed that mountains were fragile ecosystems that were the source of half of the planet's freshwater. They were repositories of rich biological diversity, popular destinations for recreation and tourism and areas of important cultural diversity, knowledge and heritage. Being extremely vulnerable to the impact of global warming, mountain ecosystems were early indicators of climate change. Consequently, there was a need to ensure the ecological health and the economic and social improvement of mountain areas, for the sake both of mountain inhabitants and of people living in lowland areas. Many of the world's most impoverished and food-insecure people lived in mountain regions.

42. Awareness of the importance of mountain peoples and environments had increased since the adoption of chapter 13 of Agenda 21 at the Earth Summit in 1992. Commitments had been strengthened during 2002 with the International Year of Mountains and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which had resulted in the launch of the Mountain Partnership, a global alliance aiming at protecting the mountain environment and enhancing the livelihood of mountain communities. Yet, despite that growing awareness and despite the many positive results achieved, there were still key challenges to achieving sustainable development and poverty alleviation in mountains. Those challenges included: the growing demand for natural resources including water and wood; the consequences of erosion, deforestation and other forms of watershed degradation; the increasing occurrence of natural disasters; increasing out-migration; the pressures of industry, transport, mining, agriculture; and the consequences of global climate change.

43. The Food and Agriculture Organization was honoured to be the lead coordinating agency for International Mountain Day celebrated on 11 December every year, with the current year's focus being on disaster risk management.

44. The Secretary-General's report, prepared in cooperation with the Mountain Partnership secretariat, described the status of sustainable mountain development at the national and international levels, including an overall analysis of the challenges that lay ahead, and provided suggestions for consideration by the General Assembly as to how to continue to promote and sustain development in mountain regions around the world.

45. Much of the substantive work was being done by countries themselves. The issues that were being addressed included education, climate change, indigenous matters, high-quality products and value-chain approaches, ecosystem management and improved governance of natural resources, but much remained to be done. She drew attention to the many areas where further work was needed, listed at the end of the report. In order to achieve all of those objectives, there was a clear need for higher levels of funding and investment, enhanced coordination and collaboration, and a stronger enabling environment.

46. **Mr. El-Habr** (Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for West Asia) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/64/259), which provided an update on the progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 61/194, 62/188 and 63/211 on the oil slick on Lebanese shores resulting from the bombing of El-Jiyeh power plant in July 2006 and complemented the information presented in previous reports of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/62/343 and A/63/225).

47. *Mr. Mićić (Serbia), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

48. **Ms. Castaño** (Director of the UNEP New York Office) introduced, on behalf of the Executive Director of UNEP, the report of the Governing Council of UNEP on its twenty-fifth session (A/64/25).

49. The session had taken place at a time of escalating economic, social and environmental crises. The world was in economic recession, food security was severely threatened and the most recent projections of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change suggested that climate change was likely to occur much faster than previously thought. During the ministerial consultations, environment ministers and deputy ministers had expressed concern that environmental degradation and widespread changes resulting from human activity, together with natural processes and the loss of ecosystem services and goods, were barriers to the attainment of internationally agreed development goals and sustainable development.

50. Ministers had tackled head-on the issue of how to respond effectively to current global challenges. Much of their consultations had revolved around the need to move towards a green economy. Moving towards a green and low-carbon economy would deliver multiple benefits for the international community and Governments in addressing food, energy and water security and would ultimately result in the achievement of sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals. The term "green economy", as defined by UNEP, referred to an economic system which recognized that the properties of healthy ecosystems were the backbone of economic and social well-being and a precondition for poverty reduction and in which ecosystem degradation costs were internalized and such environmental industries as clean and efficient technologies and sustainable agriculture served as major engines for economic growth, job creation and poverty reduction.

51. The shift towards a green economy required the adoption and implementation of coherent policies that integrated economic, social and environmental aspects, which in turn required collaboration among different sectoral ministries at the national level and cohesion among organizations and institutions dealing with sustainable development at the international level. The transition towards a green economy could not therefore be considered in isolation from international environmental governance. The current global crises provided an opportunity to examine the capacity of national and international governance structures and their ability to meet current and future environmental and development challenges. High-level political guidance must be brought back into the international environmental governance discussion and clear milestones set in the next three years.

52. By its decision 25/4, the Governing Council had established a consultative group of ministers or high-level representatives, which it had requested to present a set of options for improving international environmental governance to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its eleventh special session in February 2010. The conclusions reached by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at that session would provide input to, among other things, the General Assembly's follow-up to the measures set out in paragraph 169 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. The Governing Council process was therefore fully synchronized with that of the General Assembly. Moreover, the General Assembly would decide on the way forward in addressing the challenge of strengthening international environmental governance.

53. Lastly, the Governing Council had adopted sixteen other decisions of importance to the work of the General Assembly and the United Nations system as a whole. They included decision 25/1, entitled "Implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on international environmental governance"; decision 25/2, entitled "World environmental situation"; decision 25/5, entitled "Chemicals management, including mercury"; and decision 25/13, entitled "Proposed biennial programme and support budgets for the biennium 2010-2011".

54. **Mr. Inomata** (Joint Inspection Unit (JIU)) introduced the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of JIU entitled "Management review of environmental governance within the United Nations system" (A/64/83-E/2009/83). The report itself had been sent to United Nations system entity executive heads on 17 December 2008. The Governing Council of UNEP had discussed the report at its twenty-fifth session and had established a consultative group of ministers or high-level representatives, which it had requested to present a set of options for improving international environmental governance to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its eleventh special session, with a view to providing inputs to the General Assembly.

55. Regarding the concern expressed by United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) members in relation to recommendations 8 and 9, he said that CEB members had confused incremental cost funding with additional official development assistance (ODA). The term "incremental cost" referred to the change in total cost arising from the implementation of an additional measure of environmental protection. Such costs should be borne by the international community.

56. That CEB members had accepted most of the recommendations of JIU reflected the close communication and cooperation between JIU and CEB. Many of the recommendations, if properly implemented by the executive heads, would assist Member States in strengthening environmental governance within the system. The Secretary-General and the executive heads concerned should therefore be urged to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session a report on the implementation of the JIU recommendations addressed to and agreed by them as well as appropriate inputs to facilitate their consideration.

57. **Mr. Herman** (CEB secretariat), introducing the note by the Secretary-General transmitting his comments and those of CEB on the report of JIU entitled "Management review of environmental governance within the United Nations system" (A/64/83/Add.1-E/2009/83/Add.1), said that, while climate change had reached the highest levels of global action, many other issues related to the natural environment had received international attention in recent years. They included the threat to the ozone layer, desertification and biodiversity loss and they all posed a major challenge to the achievement of sustainable development. Multilateral environmental agreements were a key component of the response to those and other environmental challenges. The United Nations system therefore welcomed as timely and relevant the report of JIU, which examined the need to strengthen the governance of, and programmatic and administrative support for, such agreements.

58. **Ms. Osman** (Sudan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group welcomed the adoption by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventeenth session, of resolution 17/1, on policy options and practical measures to expedite implementation in agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa and looked forward to the full implementation of the key policy options in relation to the thematic cluster of issues for the implementation cycle 2008/2009 (policy session). Further implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development required greater emphasis on sustainable production and consumption patterns, with developed countries taking the lead, in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The themes of the Commission's eighteenth and nineteenth sessions were particularly relevant to current global challenges. The Group looked forward to participating in discussions at those sessions. The current implementation cycle coincided with preparations for the high-level event on sustainable development, which the Group hoped would provide an opportunity to review and assess progress made since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development and to provide the political impetus needed to bridge the implementation gap. The Group supported Brazil's offer to host such an event in 2012.

59. The vulnerabilities of small island developing States to the vagaries of climate change and other external events were well known. Small island developing States were unable to address such challenges alone and therefore required international support. To that end, adequate resources must be allocated to the Small Island Developing States Unit. The high-level review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be held in September 2010, provided an opportunity to assess progress made, lessons learned and constraints encountered in implementation.

60. Natural disasters had an increasingly devastating impact on lives, property and livelihoods. Despite growing recognition of the benefits of investing in disaster risk reduction, financial resources had thus far been insufficient. The Group supported the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and its mandate to promote public awareness and commitment, to expand networks and partnerships, and to improve knowledge about the causes of disaster and the options for risk reduction. More must be done to develop early warning systems, to increase disaster preparedness and to reduce risks. Developing countries must be assisted in that regard.

61. Climate change discussions must be placed squarely within the context of sustainable development, highlighting all three pillars in an integrated, coordinated and balanced manner. The global nature of climate change required all countries to cooperate to the fullest extent possible and to participate in an effective and appropriate international response, in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and their national circumstances. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol thereto remained the central multilateral framework for cooperative action to address climate change. The success of the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, to be held in Copenhagen in December 2009, would be measured by the extent to which all parties to the Convention fulfilled their commitments; by developed countries' willingness to adopt ambitious targets in the second and subsequent commitment periods; and by the degree to which the international community assisted developing countries in addressing the consequences of climate change, in particular through new, additional and predictable funding, capacity-building and access to,'and development and transfer of, technology. Annex I countries must take serious steps to address the root causes of climate change. In particular, they must change their unsustainable production and consumption patterns, meet developing countries' adaptation costs, adopt more ambitious commitments to reduce emissions and provide the necessary financial and technological support to developing countries.

62. Desertification, drought and land degradation seriously threatened development and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The Group acknowledged the role being played by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in helping countries combat desertification and reclaim degraded land. The international community must substantially increase its resource allocation to the GEF focal area on land degradation during the fifth replenishment to allow the increasing demand for services in that area to be met. Moreover, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, must be used to address sustainable development challenges. The Group called on countries to enter into a renewed partnership towards the implementation of the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention and to pledge to meet the objectives contained therein by 2018, and welcomed the introduction of regional coordination mechanisms and the possible establishment of regional offices.

63. The Group supported the many activities planned by the Convention on Biological Diversity secretariat in connection with the International Year of Biodiversity, 2010, to raise awareness about continuing biodiversity loss, to highlight the urgent need to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss significantly by 2010 and to mobilize global support for the Convention's implementation. It was to be hoped that a broad spectrum of stakeholders would participate in, and contribute to, those activities. The Group looked forward to the successful outcome of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010. The finalization and adoption of an international access and benefit-sharing regime by 2010 was a priority of the Group. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing was urged to complete the elaboration and negotiation of such a regime at the earliest possible time before the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. She underscored the importance of addressing means of implementation effectively and recalled that the achievement by 2010 of a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss would require the provision of new and additional financial and technical resources to developing countries.

64. The development of new and renewable energy was essential, as it would offer developing countries alternative energy sources. The availability of clean alternative energy sources was a prerequisite for attaining internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Moreover, the promotion of new and renewable energy could alleviate poverty and empower billions of people. To that end, developed country support for the development and transfer of technology was critical. The issue of intellectual property rights should not be used to frustrate the transfer of new and renewable energy technologies.

65. As the leading global environmental authority and the principal United Nations system entity for the

environment, UNEP should, within its mandate, take account of developing countries' sustainable development needs. The outcome of the UNEP Governing Council's twenty-fifth session was critical to the work of UNEP and to the management of environmental issues globally. UNEP could, within its mandate, provide leadership in responding to current environmental challenges. The Group hoped that the medium-term strategy for the period 2010-2013 would help streamline UNEP activities in a manner that guaranteed a proper focus on both environmental challenges and the UNEP mandate. The international community's ability urgently and effectively to implement the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building would be a good measure of its willingness to translate commitments into action. In that regard, she welcomed the decision to mainstream the Bali Strategic Plan into all UNEP programmes. For UNEP to succeed, it must be given adequate financial and technical resources and capacity-building. She called on the United Nations to increase its financial allocations to UNEP from the regular budget and urged donors to scale up their support for UNEP activities and projects.

66. **Mr. Ström** (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Montenegro and Serbia; and, in addition, Armenia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the European Union welcomed the proposal by the Group of 77 and China to hold the high-level event on sustainable development in 2012. Such an event would provide an opportunity further to mainstream sustainability policies that fostered a green economy and reduced poverty. For the event to be meaningful, however, there must be broad agreement within the General Assembly as to how the event could complement existing sustainable development processes without negatively affecting or diverting resources away from them. The European Union looked forward to participating in discussions about the content and agenda of the event.

67. The essence of sustainable development was meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. The promotion and integration of economic, social and environmental strategies was a core United Nations system function. Forty years had passed since Sweden had proposed the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, the Organization's first major environmental conference. Today, a new era might be in the making, ushering in an eco-efficient economy and an equitable development model.

68. It was in Member States' interest to ensure that the decisions made by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventeenth session were taken up by the relevant agencies and used to guide United Nations operations on the ground. Member States should therefore monitor implementation while also ensuring national-level implementation. The European Union looked forward to the next implementation cycle. The Commission's eighteenth and nineteenth sessions provided an opportunity to produce concrete, coherent and well-coordinated policy solutions for furthering the implementation of commitments relating to its thematic issues, to address interlinkages between those thematic issues, and to address the cross-cutting issues identified at the Commission's eleventh session.

69. The European Union congratulated the Secretary-General on the success of the Summit on Climate Change, held in New York in September 2009, and welcomed world leaders' determination urgently to address climate change and their support for increased action and financing. The General Assembly should now ensure that the Summit's message was translated into a global, ambitious and comprehensive agreement in Copenhagen.

70. The world must adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, floods, drought and extreme weather. To that end, concrete, swift and adequate support must be given to the poorest and most vulnerable countries. Climate change must be given a gender perspective if effective, durable and equitable outcomes were to be achieved. Women were important agents for development and should therefore be active participants and decision makers in climate change adaptation and mitigation.

71. The European Union stressed the need for a legally binding agreement for the period beginning 1 January 2013 that built on the Kyoto Protocol and incorporated all its essential elements. The European Union wanted all developed countries to undertake to reduce emissions by 30 per cent by 2020, as compared to 1990 levels, and to take immediate action in that regard. A deal on financing would be a central part of any agreement reached in Copenhagen. A gradual but significant increase in additional public and private

financial flows was needed to help developing countries implement ambitious mitigation and adaptation strategies. The European Union was ready to assume its fair share of the global effort by setting ambitious mitigation targets, allowing for offsets and providing public support.

72. The European Union welcomed the operationalization of the Adaptation Fund and the progress made in discussions on mechanisms to reduce deforestation and forest degradation and to promote conservation, sustainable forest management and forest carbon stock enhancement in developing countries. The European Union was discussing ways to enhance cooperation on safe and sustainable low-carbon technologies.

73. It was time for the international community to take action to keep global warming below 2° C. All countries must contribute in accordance with their responsibilities and respective capacities. Global emissions must peak no later than 2020, must be reduced by at least 50 per cent by 2050, as compared to 1990 levels, and must continue to decline thereafter. European Union leaders had recently agreed to reduce emissions by between 80 and 95 per cent by 2050. The scientific findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change provided a common platform for action. The decision by Heads of State and Government, ministers and heads of delegation present at the high-level segment of the third World Climate Conference, held in Geneva, Switzerland, in August/September 2009, to establish a Global Framework for Climate Services could further support decision-making. As scientific evidence evolved, climate change policies must be adjusted. At the same time, the United Nations system must continue to work towards a more coherent response to climate change. The European Union supported the efforts made by the Secretary-General and CEB in that regard.

74. The world was on the threshold of a major transition to a global low-carbon economy. Policies to address climate change, poverty reduction and economic competitiveness must be identified and implemented. Access to modern energy was critical in daily life and essential to industrial progress and urban development. Declining energy investments in 2009 would be particularly problematic for the poor. A clean new deal was needed to promote clean technology and effective energy use. Increasingly, international competitiveness would depend on the ability to produce and distribute reliable, affordable, economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound energy services.

75. One of the best ways to control climate change was to reduce and ultimately to eliminate emissions arising from energy production and use. Underpinning that move would be the promotion of new and renewable energy sources, strong action on enhancing energy efficiency and energy savings, and increased research and development for environmentally sound and socially acceptable low-carbon technologies.

76. The share of primary world energy from renewable sources was expected to remain at 13 per cent between 2005 and 2030. The potential was much greater. The European Union welcomed the establishment of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and its potential contribution to promoting a rapid global transition towards the sustainable use of renewable energy. The European Union had recently decided to join IRENA and would actively promote a fruitful partnership between IRENA and the United Nations.

77. High and fluctuating primary energy prices, increasing global energy demand and energy supply uncertainty called for global efforts to guide investments and technology transfer towards the energy sector. The common aim must be to ensure sustained growth based on environmentally sustainable development for all countries while diversifying energy sources to increase energy supply security.

78. The adoption of time-bound national and regional targets and commitments on energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and access to affordable energy was essential to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Policies that maintained the necessary support for energy access without hindering renewable energy growth, energy efficiency and energy savings should be encouraged.

79. Renewable energies should be developed and used in a sustainable manner. Capacity-building and adequate financial resources were required to promote renewable energy. Many United Nations entities had a role to play in that regard. A coherent approach supported by UN-Energy would be essential.

80. The world was not on track significantly to reduce biodiversity loss by 2010. The European Union was deeply concerned by the ongoing and

unprecedented human-induced depletion of species, ecosystems and genes and was committed to implementing a strong policy response to achieve all the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Concrete action must be taken to reverse the trend at all levels, taking into account the significance of partnerships with indigenous peoples and local communities for sustainable biodiversity and ecosystem services management. Furthermore, a new, ambitious and credible post-2010 global biodiversity target must be identified. At the high-level meeting of the General Assembly to be convened in September 2010, Heads of State and Government should play a prominent role in establishing a new global vision, to be supplemented by concrete biodiversity targets adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to be held in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010. The European Union also stood ready to participate actively in the International Year of Biodiversity. The negotiation of an international access and benefit-sharing regime should be concluded before the Nagoya meeting in 2010. Biodiversity played a crucial role in combating desertification, land degradation and climate change. Greater cooperation and coordination in those areas would help promote sustainable development policies. To strengthen synergies, there must be effective cooperation among the three Rio Conventions.

81. The European Union had a long history of cooperation with small island developing States and was committed to implementing the Mauritius Strategy. It welcomed the significant progress made and acknowledged the threat posed by climate change to human and national security in small island States. The high-level review of the Mauritius Strategy would offer an opportunity to address challenges to the sustainable development of those States.

82. Mountains and highlands were home to 600 million people, the source of water for over half the world's population and an irreplaceable reserve of valuable mineral resources. The European Union encouraged sustainable spatial planning that aimed to protect biodiversity and to safeguard the cultural heritage of man-made ecosystems; noted the importance of pro-poor policies in ensuring sustainable development in mountain regions; and supported efforts to strengthen women's right to resources and their role in communities and cultures in mountain regions.

83. Desertification and land degradation threatened the very existence of hundreds of millions of people and undermined the stability of fragile States. In many areas, combating desertification was a practical and effective way of adapting to the effects of climate change. Such challenges could not be addressed without continued cooperation and reinforced synergies between the three Rio Conventions. The European Union welcomed the decisions adopted at the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in September/October 2009.

84. Integrated water resource management at the basin level and transboundary cooperation were key to adapting to climate change and to addressing concerns over food production, energy security, economic stability and conflict prevention. Access to safe drinking water, sanitation and good water management was crucial for sustainable development, economic growth, health and well-being. Water was inextricably linked to gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment. Women and girls therefore played a crucial role in water-related activities and investments. Water issues should be addressed at the high-level event on sustainable development to be held, possibly, in 2012. In addition, the European Union would engage in the Tajik proposal to address water issues halfway through the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015.

85. The European Union was committed to building the capacity of communities at risk through support for the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. A comprehensive approach should be embraced throughout the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system. To that end, Member States should make full use of the system's mechanisms. By linking disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, policy coherence could be enhanced and resources more effectively used.

86. Lastly, the European Union welcomed the outcome of the twenty-fifth session of the UNEP Governing Council. The outcome of the reform process and the medium-term strategy for the period 2010-2013 would facilitate efforts to establish strategic frameworks and to pursue results-based management. The decision to begin preparations for a legally binding instrument on mercury was of paramount importance. The European Union welcomed the UNEP process for

establishing an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and hoped that discussions on how best to mobilize and draw on research-based advice could be concluded by 2010. The European Union wished to see UNEP strengthened and would plead for ambitious reform of the international environmental governance system.

87. **Mr. Bowoleksono** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which supported the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, even though the implementation of Agenda 21 and of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development had generated substantial benefits at all levels and even though internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, had strengthened the sustainable development process, the world remained fraught with poverty and inequity. Moreover, multiple global crises and climate change threatened to reverse decades of development progress. Already considerable challenges could become insurmountable if the international community's approach to development was not rethought and restructured. Never before had there been so much momentum for a global paradigm shift towards green development. Moreover, environmental concerns and economic growth, once considered incompatible goals, were beginning to merge.

88. The high-level event on sustainable development to be held, possibly, in 2012 would provide an opportunity to launch innovative measures that addressed global dilemmas and ushered in a new phase of sustainable development. ASEAN looked forward to contributing constructively to the event, which should focus on ways to promote the full implementation of Agenda 21. The event could also be used to discuss international governance for sustainable development. Indeed, it provided an opportunity to seek political impetus at the highest level for a strengthened international institutional structure for environmental and development governance.

89. The next two years would present an opportunity to build a green development platform based on the three Rio Conventions. The Copenhagen Climate Change Conference, to be held in December 2009, would test the international will to respond seriously to climate change and to move forward on a green economy. ASEAN leaders were committed to contributing actively to the Conference with a view to ensuring a fair, equitable, effective, flexible and inclusive deal that struck a balance between development and climate imperatives. In addition, the International Year of Biodiversity, 2010, and the International Year of Forests, 2011, should be seen as complementing efforts to eradicate poverty and to achieve food security and should strengthen the commitment to address forests in the global climate response. Moreover, desertification must be addressed through the full implementation of the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (2008-2018).

90. Discussions about sustainable development could not be separated from the need to promote food and energy security. Agricultural technology must play a central role in a sustainable green revolution. Special attention should be paid to helping smallholders increase productivity and adopt sustainable practices. The energy crisis and climate change had accentuated the need for new and renewable energy sources. Adequate financial and human resources must be mobilized and deployed, and technology transferred to developing countries. The United Nations should facilitate the establishment of a multilateral fund and an international centre to advance energy technologies. In that regard, ASEAN supported efforts to make the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building an integral part of the work of UNEP and other United Nations system entities.

91. The world had experienced a staggering increase in the number and intensity of natural disasters. The loss of life, property and livelihood caused by recent disasters in ASEAN member countries hampered both the achievement of sustainable development and regional integration processes. Heads of State and Government participating in the fourth East Asia Summit, held on 25 October 2009 in Cha-am Hua Hin, Thailand, had reaffirmed their commitment to pursue effective disaster risk reduction in a spirit of partnership and cooperation and had recalled that disaster risk reduction was a priority area of cooperation. Closer cooperation among relevant stakeholders was key to ensuring timely responses. In that connection, he mentioned the importance of building national and local capacity and developing early warning networks.

92. ASEAN recognized the specific vulnerabilities of small island developing States. Indeed, ASEAN

member countries were vulnerable to sea level rise caused by climate change. Ocean issues must be mainstreamed in climate change discussions. The potential damage to global food security and livelihoods was a matter of great concern. The high-level review of the Mauritius Strategy would provide an opportunity to re-emphasize the vulnerabilities of small island developing States and to address the factors hampering their efforts to achieve sustainable development. The full participation of all development partners was vital if the review was to be a success and the national capacity of small island developing States enhanced.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.